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REMARKS

ON THE

DOCTRINE

OF THE

ETERNAL SONSHIP

of

CHRIST:

TOGETHER WITH OBSERVATIONS ON SEVERAL PASSAGES OF
SCRIPTURE, GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD TO CON-
TAIN THAT DOCTRINE.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

By ANDREW McCAMBRIDGE. *Savonniar.*

"If, by the advice of a certain poor man, groaning truth should be delivered from under the bondage of vaunting error, let no one despise that same poor man."

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PREFACE.

IT may be necessary to remark, that, when I first saw Mr. Watson's pamphlet, nothing was more remote from my views and intentions than that of becoming author, but, when I beheld the effects it produced on a Gentleman, in whom sincerity and literary attainments are combined ; I immediately resolved to peruse it with assiduity.

Having obtained the work, I commenced reading it ; and was astonished at seeing some passages of Scripture obviously wrested to a wrong meaning.

This, I communicated to an intimate acquaintance, who earnestly desired me to note down my remarks on the doctrine in dispute. No sooner had I complied with his request, than, considering that the boldness of assertion with which Mr. Watson has written, and the extent of influence which his work possesses, tend greatly to establish an error which must gradually divest the mind of a doctrine which lays deep at the foundation of religion ; I have, (not without hopes of success) endeavoured to shew, that the passages of Scripture quoted in that work, have no tendency to prove the disputed doctrine.

A. McC.

ERRATA.

- Page 6, line 22, for contrary read *contradictory*.
— 11, line 22— for constitutes read *constituta*.
— 19, line 32— for give read *gave*.
— 17, line 22— for his Sermon read *his first Sermon*.
— 23, line 2— for persons read *person*.
— 25, line 1— heather read *heathen*.
— 26, line 26— for Apostles read *Apostle*.
— 16— in the note, 2d line, read “who at sundry times
and in divers manners.”

MY DEAR SIR,

IN compliance with your request, I proceed to make some remarks on the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship.

If the words *Eternal Son* be taken in the meaning in which they are understood in the conventional language of mankind, they without doubt, imply a positive self contradiction. Can any man deny, that *Son* implies a *Father*? or that *Father* implies, in reference to *Son*, precedence of existence as a person? If these questions must be answered in the negative, then, it incontrovertibly follows, that as *Father*, in reference to *Son*, implies precedence of existence, so *Son* in reference to *Father*, implies subsequence of existence; therefore, he who is a *Father*, must, in point of actual personal existence, necessarily be older than his *Son*. Such is the universally acknowledged meaning of these terms, and if we do not use them in their precise signification, we shall only wander in the land of chimeras and impose on mankind, by asserting that we know what we in reality know not. The impropriety, therefore, of the title *Eternal Son*, must be obvious. *Eternal*, signifies duration without beginning, as well as without end. But I have proved that *Son*, in reference to *Father*, implies subsequence of personal existence, and consequently, that he who is a *Son* cannot as such be eternal. Therefore, when we assert that the two first persons in the *Trinity* are co-existent, and yet speak of them in terms which incontrovertibly imply precedence in the one and subsequence in the other, we either mean to assert the following palpable contradiction: viz. that these two persons are co-existent and not co-existent, or we totally pervert the established meaning of the terms, and use the most contemptible quibbling to maintain a false and dangerous tenet. A very judicious author,* who has written in defence of this title, informs us that, "it would be difficult if

* The Editor of Doddridge's Lectures, published in 1801.

not impossible to form an idea of Fatherhood and Sonship, but as co-relative and co-existent."

"One may indeed," continues he, "exist as a man before his son, but not as the father of such a son." This I conceive to be a mere evasion, because the question is not, whether one is really a father before he has a son, but whether father does not imply a real personal existence prior to that of son.

It is allowed, that the two first persons in the Trinity are co-existent, and that a contrary representation of them would be a dangerous error. We should not, then, with reference to those persons, use terms, which taken in their established meaning, actually convey ideas directly contrary to co-existence. Aware of this, the author just alluded to, acknowledges, "that among men, a father has a personal existence prior to his fatherhood." However, seeing that such an acknowledgment obviously points out the impropriety of the title in question, he immediately adds these words: "But not so in the present subject."

What! does the subject alter the meaning of the term? The precision of language depends on its terms; therefore, no man can be justified in using them in direct contradiction to their precise signification. If men affix different and contrary ideas to the same term, the consequence must be, that the mind of the speaker will be apprehended by the hearer in a contrary sense to what the speaker intends.

But let terms be used in their precise signification, and this will no longer be the case. Then, those inconsistent divines, who by the abuse of words, have often thrown the world into confusion, will sink in eternal disgrace.

Thus, even reason exposes the absurdity of the title. However, I am not ignorant that some have endeavoured to defend it from the sacred records; I shall therefore, shew from conclusive Scriptural authority, that even the bare title, "Son," was not used, by the inspired writers, with absolute and abstract reference to the eternal Logos. The glorious being, of whom I have just made mention, frequently appeared to the

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holy men of old ; and though he was spoken of and addressed by them, under various titles, yet, he was never addressed under the title Son of God.

In the second Psalm it is indeed said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." But, these words were spoken only with prophetic reference, and in that sense, St. Paul cited them in his Sermon in the Synagogue at Antioch : "And we declare unto you good tidings, how that the promise, which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their Children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again ; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

God had promised to raise up one to sit upon the throne of David, and to reign over the house of Jacob. Christ upon his resurrection, having received all power in Heaven & in Earth, and being exalted to the right hand of God, must reign for ever. The promise, therefore, was fulfilled by the resurrection of Christ, who was thereby made the first born from the dead, and who is consequently, said to be begotten.

Now, if with respect to that event, he may be said to be begotten, it follows, that from the period in which he was thus begotten, the title "Son," became doubly applicable to him. Therefore, the Royal Prophet, in speaking of him with reference to that event, which was then in futurity, represented the Eternal God as using the following address : "Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee." Thus, though this address was then only in futurity, yet it was spoken of by the Prophet, as actually existing. But why ? Because he spake with prophetic reference to a risen Saviour ; and by inspiration of that God, who frequently "callesth those things which be not, as though they were."

I shall now proceed to prove, that the title "Son," was only applied to Jesus, as a person in whom is included a derived nature, to which nature alone, that title can with propriety be applied.

In the fulness of time, the eternal Logos assumed human nature ; and his union with that nature was so strict and en-

fire, that even after the act of assumption, he still continued but one person.* That identical and individual person, in whom two natures are thus united, is frequently spoken of, under titles which are proper to one nature only. For instance, we are informed that his name is "Emmanuel," "God with us." Paul warns us, that "we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ," and "every one give an account of himself to God." He declares that had the Princes of this world known, "They would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." Writing to Timothy, he styles our Lord Jesus Christ, "The King of Kings and Lord of Lords," a peculiar title of Jehovah.

St. James calls him, "The Lord of Glory." And from St. John we learn, that the glorious person who "liveth and was dead," addressed him in the following words: "Fear not I am the first and the last." &c.

The last proof I shall adduce, is the case of Thomas. We are informed, that on the first day of the week, our blessed Lord appeared to his disciples, who were consequently convinced of the resurrection: Thomas, however, was not with them. The disciples, therefore, seized the first opportunity of joyfully accosting him with these words: "We have seen the Lord."

But, Thomas presumptuously rejected their testimony, and resolved not to believe, except he could put his finger into the holes made by the nails, and thrust his hand into the wound made by the spear. With resolutions like these, he determined to attend the first weekly meeting. Seven days he waited in suspense, and probably with heartfelt anxiety, attended the first assembly of the faithful.

When, to his astonishment, he not only saw Jesus standing in the midst, but heard him affectionately say, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless but believing."

Hearing himself thus addressed, and requested to believe on the evidence of so many of his senses, he immediately

* That it was not a human person, but human nature, that was assumed, is the opinion even of some who maintain the Eternal Sonship.

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answered in a transport of joy, "My Lord and my God." Here it undeniably appears that Jesus, the very person whom the Jews had treated as a malefactor, was acknowledged by the Apostle to be truly God.

But, did the Apostle apply this title, implying divine honor, to a nature infinitely below God? I answer most decidedly, No. It may indeed be asked, how, then, can he be justified, in acknowledging his crucified master to be his "Lord and his God"? Is it possible, that he who suffered death in its most hideous form, can be God?

To this I reply, Thomas addressed the risen Saviour, as a person in whom is included the undervived nature; which nature alone, is the real object of adoration; and to which the names and titles of the ever blessed God, are with propriety ascribed. But, let us consider this more at length. Whatever names and titles are appropriate to a nature constituting a person, must be considered as appropriate to the person whom that nature constitutes. Now if it be allowed, that in Jesus, the divine and human natures are united, so as to constitute but one complex personage,* it follows, that the names and titles which are appropriate to those natures, must be considered as appropriate to the one complex personage, whom those united natures constitute. As, therefore, in speaking of Jesus, as an individual person, we may with propriety call him "God," because in him is included the undervived nature, to which that title is applicable, so may we also call him "the Son of God" because in him, is included the nature, to which that title is applicable. From what has been said, it must be obvious, to every unprejudiced person, that there would be as much impropriety, in supposing that he is called, "the Son of God," with absolute and abstract reference to the Eternal Word, included in him, as there would be, in supposing the title "God," is applied to him, in reference to his human nature.

* Christ, with respect to his divine nature, has existed from everlasting; and we must consider him as a complex personage, only from the moment in which that nature became incarnate: because the joining together, or complexure which then took place, constituted him a complex personage. The contradictions and absurdities which flow from the supposition of his having been complex from everlasting, are too obvious to need pointing out.

Do not the inspired penmen, call him "God," as well as "Son of God"? But, we cannot suppose, that they applied the idea of divinity to his human nature. Reason itself warns us of the blasphemous absurdity, which such a supposition would contain.

Now from the moment in which we consider the above-mentioned titles, as applied to him, as a complex personage, constituted such by the united natures to which those titles are appropriate, the difficulty entirely disappears. It is obvious, therefore, that when the title "God," is applied to him, it must be understood with reference to him, as a person possessing the underived nature; and the title "Son of God," must be understood, with reference to him, as a person, in whom is included a derived nature, to which that title is appropriate.

Mr. Watson has indeed, adduced a few passages from the New Testament, in which he thinks the term "Son of God," is applied solely and exclusively, to the divine nature of Christ; and which, he asserts, "cannot by fair interpretation be otherwise understood."

The first passage, is the 14th verse in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel: "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." As the disputed title is thus implied in the very first passage he has adduced, I shall without apologizing, proceed to prove, that even in this passage, it cannot by fair interpretation be understood as having an exclusive reference to the divine nature.

Christ is emphatically called, "The seed of the woman;" because from it, his human nature was produced. If we turn our attention to the singular and extraordinary manner in which this Son was conceived, we shall find, that in this respect he is the only begotten of the Father.

If this Son be the only one ever conceived in a Virgin's womb; if he be the only immaculate one, that was ever form-

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ed from the seed of a human creature; and if he were thus begotten by the Father; it incontrovertibly follows, that in these respects, he is the only begotten of the Father. Let the persons who differ from me on this point, adduce a single instance, tending to prove that any other Son is in this sense, the begotten of the Father. If there never were another, then, Jesus must, in respect to the immaculate human nature, thus begotten, be the only begotten of the Father. To say, therefore, that this title is applied solely and exclusively to the divine nature of Christ, is to contradict matter of fact. But to proceed, if the title in question be appropriate to that immaculate human nature, which is a constituent part of the complex personage, called Jesus, it must also be considered as appropriate to that person.

If the arguments advanced in the preceding pages, do not prove this, they prove nothing; and I have, consequently, written in vain. But, if this point has been proved, the propriety of applying that title to Jesus, as a complex personage, is placed beyond the power of successful contradiction.

On the glory of this person, I remark, that if whatever is suitable to a nature, constituting a person, must be suitable to the person whom it constitutes, it follows, that whatever is suitable to the united natures which constitutes Jesus a complex personage, must be suitable to him, as a personage thus constituted. I conclude, therefore, that the glory suitable to the divine nature, must also be suitable to the complex personage, in whom that nature is included. I have sufficiently proved, that the personage just mentioned is with propriety entitled, "The only begotten of the Father." If, then, the disciples saw his glory, they could with propriety designate it, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father;" that is, such as was suitable to that person; such a glory as was suitable to the complex personage, in whom the divine and human natures are united; and to whom, their properties conjointly belong. Mr. Watson's argument on this passage, proceeds on the supposition that the title, "only begotten of the Father," is solely and exclusively applied to the divine nature of Jesus, merely, because under that title, assertions are made, which can only suit the *divine nature*.

But, this is a dangerous error. For, if the *title* under which things are said of Jesus, must be considered as applied solely and exclusively to the nature to which those things are *suitable*, it follows, that in some passages of Scripture, *titles* implying supreme and absolute Divinity, must be considered, as applied solely and exclusively to the human nature of Jesus.

For instance, though the title, "*Lord of Glory*", implies supreme and absolute divinity, yet Paul informs us, that had the princes of this world known, "*they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.*" Now, *crucifixion* conveys an idea which can *only suit human nature*; if then, we apply Mr. Watson's mode of argument to this passage, we shall have to conclude, that the title, "*Lord of Glory*," is applied solely and exclusively to the *human nature of Jesus*; because, under that *title*, a circumstance conveying an idea which can *only suit human nature*, is asserted of him.

Again, the Prophet Zachariah, speaking in the name of God, says, "They shall look upon *me* whom they have *pierced.*" The glorious personage, who addressed John, says; "*I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead.*"

Observe, in these passages, Jesus is spoken of under *titles*, which imply supreme and absolute divinity; and yet, such *assertions* are made, as can only suit *his human nature*. Now, if those *glorious titles* must be considered as applied solely and exclusively to the *nature* to which the *above assertions* are *suitable*, and if those *assertions* suit the *human nature only*, it follows, that those *titles*, must be considered as applied solely and exclusively to *that nature*. If this conclusion be rejected, the premises must also be rejected.

I might here adduce several more passages of scripture, which equally point out the vortex of error, to which Mr. Watson's mode of argumentation naturally leads. But, those which have been adduced, point it out with sufficient clearness.

I shall, therefore, proceed to make some observations on the second passage, which is the 18th verse of the same

Chapter, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." It is universally admitted, that here, and in the verse just explained, the same person is spoken of.

The arguments which have been advanced, in the explanation of that verse, fully prove that the title, "only begotten Son," is with propriety applied to him as a complex personage.

Now, if the names, titles and attributes, which are ascribed to the natures constituting that complex personage, called Jesus, must also be ascribed to that complex personage himself, it follows, that omniscience or boundless knowledge, is an attribute that must be ascribed to him. If, then, he possesses boundless knowledge, we may, with propriety assert that he hath known God. This conclusion is irresistible.

Thus, the fair interpretation of this passage, shews, that though no mere man hath seen, that is, hath known God at any time. yet, the complex personage, called "the only begotten Son," hath both known and declared him. To conclude, if we turn to the former part of the chapter, from which this passage is taken, we shall find, that the inspired penman, speaking with reference to that duration which preceded the act of incarnation, does not apply the title, "Son of God," to the divine nature. On the contrary, he uses an appellation, which has no relation either to priority, or subsequence of existence; and in so doing, we behold him guided by the inspiration of that Being, who from the infallibility of his nature, is incapable of error.

Mr. Watson has been equally unfortunate in selecting his third proof, which is John, 3 chapter and 16 verse: "God so loved the world, that he give his only begotten Son, &c." Mr. Watson's argument on this passage, seems founded on the supposition, that the title, under which an assertion is made must be considered as applied solely and exclusively to the nature to which the assertion appears suitable. The absurdity of such a supposition has already been exposed.

I shall, therefore, only remark, that had Mr. W. examined the 13th verse of this chapter, he would have found, that under the title "Son of Man," an assertion is made, which can only suit the divine nature. Must we, then, consider that title as applicable to the divine nature? If this question must be answered in the negative, does it not point out the impropriety of supposing, that the title under which an assertion is made, must be considered as having an exclusive reference to the nature to which the assertion is suitable?

But again, if the passage in dispute be viewed in connexion with its context, it will be obvious, that the complex personage, who is with propriety, called "the only begotten Son," is here spoken of: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, (says our Lord,) even so must the son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life."

Here, it appears, that the person, by believing in whom, salvation is obtained, is entitled "his only begotten Son." Nicodemus is informed, that this Son must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Now, let me ask, is not everlasting life promised to all who believe in that complex personage, called "the Lord Jesus?" Is he not the only person through whom salvation can be obtained? Was he not given for this very purpose, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life? And lastly, if he be the only one who was ever given for this purpose, must he not be the identical person who is here represented as being God's only begotten Son? Again, we are to believe in the only begotten Son: but who is this? Is he not that complex personage, who was lifted up on the Cross; and by faith in whose name, salvation is obtained?

If the divine and human natures are united, so as to constitute that complex personage, must not the love, by which

he was given for the redemption of man, be a subject of eternal admiration?

The arguments which have been adduced in a preceding part of this letter, sufficiently prove that this complex personage is with propriety entitled, "the only begotten Son."

But to return, in the course of Mr. W's argument on this passage, I find the following quotation: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3, 17. If this passage be fairly interpreted, it cannot be understood, as being solely and exclusively applied to the divine nature. We find, that Jesus, the supposed Son of Joseph, came from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him; and that being baptized, and having gone up straightway out of the water, the Heavens were opened unto him; and a voice was heard from those glorious mansions, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus, the very person who went up straightway out of the water, was declared to be the *beloved Son of God*.

But what was this person? I answer, unhesitatingly, he was a complex personage, constituted such by the union of the divine and human natures. In the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, we may see the meaning in which the Baptist understood this declaration. We there learn, that seeing Jesus come unto him, he proceeded to give the most pointed evidence that this is the *Son of God*.

Observe, this evidence was given concerning the person whom John *saw* in the very act of coming unto him.

It was not the *divine nature* which he *saw*; and consequently, his declaration was not applied solely and exclusively to that nature: but on the contrary, it *was* applied to the personage whom he really *saw* and *pointed out*.

When men examine scripture, with the determination of supporting a pre-established creed, they frequently draw conclusions, at once the most monstrous and absurd. Of this,

Mr. Watson's argument affords a most striking instance; for, speaking of the divine nature, he says: "If it suffered no pain, it suffered something; of this there are mysterious, and, from the nature of the thing, only mysterious indications in scripture; but brief as are these notices, they are strong and emphatic." He, then, adduces the following expressions in proof: "*He emptied himself*;" "*made himself of no reputation*;" and though "*equal with God*," became "*obedient*," and, therefore truly "*a servant*."

Would Mr. W. have us believe, that the divine nature submitted to the obedience, and consequent suffering, spoken of in the passage from which these shreds are taken? Does not the Apostle give us to understand that the obedience of which he speaks was unto death, even the death of the cross? And, can we suppose, that the divine nature submitted or became obedient unto death? Can we suppose that the eternal nature, possessing omnipotence, and upholding all things, could possibly suffer death? Could that nature, which is invisible, be extended on the cross; and there ultimately expire? If we indulge the idea for a moment, must not the soul recoil, and shudder at such a view of impious irreverence?

The passage from which the above-quoted shreds are taken, may be found in the second chapter of Phillipians: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The divine nature, here, declared to be in the form of God, has indeed existed from everlasting; and when, in the fulness of time, the refulgency of his glory was voluntarily laid aside, he formed that mysterious union with the immaculate human nature, which has ever since constituted him, a complex personage.

Now this individual, though complex personage, was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a

man, (that is a common man,) he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: and, of course, he suffered as a complex person, in whom a nature capable of suffering formed a constituent part.

Again, the person of whom Paul speaks, is entitled "Christ Jesus:" and we should ever remember that this title can only be applied to him who was nailed to the accursed tree, and whose blood was shed for our redemption.

Mr. Watson's next proof is drawn from the authorized form of baptism, viz. "Baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Here the point in debate is, whether the title "Son," used in the form of baptism, is exclusively applied to the divine nature, or to that complex personage who was crucified. It is allowed that the Apostles had no authority to baptize in the name of any person, not mentioned in the above form. If, therefore, it be proved that, consistently with the above authority, they baptized in the name of that Jesus who had been crucified, we must, without doubt, acknowledge him for one of the persons mentioned in that form. That the Apostles baptized in his name, we have the most decisive evidence.

Peter, towards the conclusion of his sermon informed his hearers, that God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified both "Lord and Christ:" and, upon their enquiring what they should do,—he desired them to repent, and be baptized in the name of the very same Jesus. The believers at Samaria, were baptized in the name of the "Lord Jesus," as were also, the disciples at Ephesus. It is worthy of observation, that the crucified Jesus, being made both "Lord and Christ," is sometimes called the "Lord Jesus," and sometimes "Jesus Christ."

The passages to which I have just alluded, clearly prove that the Apostles baptized in his name. That this conduct was consistent with the authority they had received, none will dare to dispute. I, therefore conclude, that he is one of the persons mentioned in the baptismal form. Now which of the three

titles is applicable to that person? Is it not that of "Son?"

We should ever remember that the names and titles which are strictly appropriate to one nature only, are frequently applied to that complex personage, even when the passages in which they stand, refer to a nature, to which those titles are not strictly applicable. An instance of this, occurs in the 13th verse of the 3d Chapter of John's Gospel. Whoever reads that passage, must be convinced, that under the title, "*Son of Man*," Jesus speaks with *express* and *distinguishing* reference to his *divine nature*. But we cannot consider that title as strictly applicable to the *divine nature*. If, however, we view Jesus as a complex personage, constituted such, by two united natures, we shall at once see, that the names and titles which are appropriate to those natures, are also appropriate to the personage, whom those united natures constitute.

If this be granted, it must follow, that Jesus could with propriety stile himself the "*Son of Man*;" because, that title is appropriate to the human nature, which forms a constituent part of his person. If the above argument meets with due attention it will also shew the propriety with which the title "*Son*" is used. Thus, the title "*Son*," is as inapplicable to the divine nature, as the title "*Son of Man*," which occurs in the passage just quoted. The foregoing observations point out the propriety with which those titles are given to that glorious person, who "*liveth and was dead*."

Mr. Watson informs us, page 12, that "*of the human nature of Jesus, the first person is not the Father*." Now, if Mr. Watson allows that the human nature of Jesus has a Father, and that the first person is not the Father of that nature, he must, in order to be consistent, believe that Jesus, viewed as a complex personage, must be considered as having two Fathers. Mr. W. endeavours to shew, that the *first person* is the Father of the *divine nature only*. But, who I would ask, is the Father of the human nature? That title is not applied to the *Holy Ghost* in any part of the sacred volume. Indeed, the 32nd and 35th verses of the first chapter of Luke, afford strong proof, that the first person is the Father of the nature in question. If we turn to the baptism of our Lord, we

shall find, that when the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost had descended upon Jesus, a voice, *representing the first person*, was heard from Heaven : saying, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" John informs us, that this testimony was delivered concerning the person whom he had baptized, and whom he saw going up straightway out of the water.

Now, if this testimony had a reference to what John saw, and if *that* was the human nature of Jesus, must we not conclude, that the glorious person who gave the testimony, is the Father of that nature ?

To proceed, Mr. W. offers to our attention the third and fourth verses in the first chapter of Romans, which he views as an express proof of the disputed doctrine. These seem to form his principal fort, I shall therefore quote them at length. "Concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Though Jesus wrought miracles sufficient to demonstrate both his divine mission and his divinity; yet the Jews viewed him as a mere pretender, and considered the *power* by which his miracles were wrought, as that of magic.—Some even said : "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the chief of the devils." However, the person who was thus *treated*, and ultimately *crucified* as a malefactor, was by the resurrection of his body, declared to be the Son of God ; *invested with a power* which, far from being what the Jews basely supposed, was on the contrary, strictly according to the *spirit of holiness*.

Had Jesus been a mere pretender, his body would not have been raised from the dead. That astonishing event was, therefore, a manifest proof that the identical *person* who had been *crucified* was the "*Son of God* ;" and that the *power* with which he was *invested* (as has already been observed,) was according to the spirit of holiness. This passage, therefore, shews that though Jesus was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, yet that identical person was, by the

resurrection, declared to be the "Son of God." But though the resurrection proves him to be the "Son of God," yet it does not prove the Sonship of a nature which is *invisible* and divine. Had Jesus ever asserted that his divine nature was the Son of God; I would readily acknowledge that the truth of this assertion was proved by the resurrection: for, had he asserted a falsehood, God would not have raised him from the dead.

Mr. Watson, after endeavouring to shew that an opposition is expressed between what Christ was according to the flesh, and what he was according to a higher nature; proceeds to draw the following conclusion:—"Here then I think, whatever may be the sense of the phrase, according to 'the spirit of holiness,' which follows, and which, whether it refer to the divine nature of our Lord, or to the agency of the Holy Spirit in raising him from the dead, does not at all weaken the argument, because it does not affect the contrast in the text, is a passage in which the two natures of Christ are placed in distinction, and even in opposition, and of the higher or divine nature, it is expressly affirmed that it is the Son of God."

What! if the phrase, "according to the spirit of holiness," refers "to the agency of the holy spirit in raising our Lord from the dead," does it not weaken Mr. Watson's argument? Does it not lead us to conclude that *Jesus Christ* is the Son of God, with reference to the agency of that Spirit, in raising him from the dead? And if so, does it not follow that as the Son in question was raised from the dead, therefore the divine nature cannot be that Son? Moreover, if the phrase refer to that agency, then the sense of the passage in debate is as follows: concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the "Son of God" with power, in reference to the agency of the Holy Spirit, in raising him from the dead. If this sense be admitted it shews that the contrast which Mr. W. seems so anxious to establish, does not exist in the passage of which the controverted phrase forms a part.

To conclude, if that phrase does not signify, according to

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the divine nature, we cannot consider the passage under consideration, as a proof that by the resurrection, Jesus Christ was declared to be the son of God, according to his divine nature. The whole weight of evidence relative to the desired contrast, rests on the proper signification of that phrase. But the uncertainty of its signification, is sufficiently pointed out, by the disagreeing views of men, celebrated for sound learning, and profound erudition. As, therefore, the evidence in favour of that contrast, depends on a phrase, the signification of which is uncertain, we should not consider it as explicit and incontrovertible. Again, as the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship contradicts the plain dictates of reason, we should not admit it without having the clearest and most positive evidence of its truth. I have shewn that the passage in question, contains no such evidence; and consequently, it does not prove the disputed doctrine.

Mr. Watson, after finding fault with Dr. Clarke's phrase, proceeds to examine whether the term "Son of God" was considered a synonyme of the appellation Messiah, among the first disciples of Jesus, and among the Jews with their Priests and Rulers.

Though this is not the point in dispute, yet I shall endeavour to shew that the passages* which Mr. W. has cited in the course of the examination, have no tendency to prove the doctrine against which I contend. The first quotation is Nathanael's acknowledgement of Jesus: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." It must be allowed that the person whom Nathanael *addressed* is here acknowledged to be the *Son of God*. But I would seriously ask, did he not *address* these words to the very person whom he *saw*; and to *whom* he was in the *very act of going*? That the title "Son of God" could with propriety be applied to that person has been already shewn. But it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prove that either Nathanael or any other disciple, at that time, knew on what its propriety depended.

The second passage is Peter's celebrated confession of Christ, Matt. 16 c. 16 v. "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living

* The passages to which I allude, are evidently cited under an impression, that they tend to prove the Sonship of the underived nature.

God." The evangelist informs us, that "when Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his Disciples, saying, whom do men say that I, the son of man, am? And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets." "He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.'" Mr. Watson intimates, there is an opposition between the terms, "Son of Man," and "Son of God;" and that here, as well as in the passage quoted from Romans, the first title stands for the designation of the human nature, and the second for that of a higher nature. But were Mr. W. more careful in studying the sacred volume, he would find that Peter's confession, was not an answer to the question in which the title "Son of Man" occurs; but, on the contrary, it was an answer to a subsequent one, viz. "But whom say ye that I am?" As for the pretended opposition, I am really unable to discover any intimation of it in the passage. Is not the identical person who stiled himself the "Son of Man," declared by Peter to be the son of the living God? If under these two titles the very same person be alluded to, where, I enquire, is the pretended opposition? The titles are indeed different, but they are both applied to the very same person, and consequently, are to be understood of one person only.

If this conclusion be admitted, the asserted opposition will appear, "as the baseless fabric of a vision"; and we shall be constrained to view Peter, as speaking with *sole reference* to that suffering Jesus, whom he had already followed for a considerable time; and whom he had frequently *seen* in the very act of performing those stupendous miracles, which at once explained the prophecies; and which, accompanied with the influence of God, proved the person, by whom they were performed, to be "*The Son of the living God.*" Thus Peter, far from speaking with reference to a supposed eternal generation, of a nature which is invisible and underived, spake with mere reference to a person, whom he actually saw and addressed.

Let us now consider the example afforded in Matthew, the 14 ch. 33 ver. "Of a truth, thou art the son of God."

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These words must be considered as merely referring to the identical persons, whom the disciples had seen walking on the sea. That, what was thus *seen*, was not the *invisible nature of Jesus*, will be readily allowed by all, except by those who can reconcile themselves to believe palpable contradictions.

Let us now examine the case of the blind man, as recorded in the 9th chap. of John. Jesus heard that the Pharisees had cast this man out : "and when he had found him, he said unto him, dost thou believe on the son of God ?" To this the man replied, "who is *he*, Lord, that I might believe on *him* ?"—Our blessed Saviour then said, "thou hast both *seen him*, and it is *he* that *talketh with thee*." Here it is obvious, that the title "son of God" was used as the designation of the very person whom the *man* in question *had really seen*. Therefore, to say that the title "Son of God" is used with exclusive reference to the invisible nature, is flatly to contradict the positive assertion of our Lord. This conclusion will be found irresistible, if we keep in mind, that the answer to the question, "who is *he*, Lord, that I might believe on *him* ?" was, "thou hast both *seen him*," (*the Son of God*), "and it is *he* that *talketh with thee*."

If we enquire, why Jesus suffered himself to be worshipped ; the answer is obvious. By the entire union of the divine and human natures, he was constituted but one complex personage ; and consequently, the worship due to the divine nature, was due to that personage. Jesus, then, received the worship, because in his person, was included the underived nature, which is the real object of adoration. The propriety with which, that person is entitled, "The Son of God," we have already noticed.

In the 24th page of Mr. Watson's pamphlet, the following positions may be found : "That the disciples of Christ allowed him to be the Messiah and the Son of God; that the Jews doubted whether he were the Messiah, and frequently resorted to him to obtain evidence of it ; that occasionally, in great numbers, they professed to be convinced, though waveringly, of his claim to that character ; (on one occasion, they would have proclaimed him king;) but that, *at all times*, they steadily resisted his claim to be the Son of God; his claim that God

was his "*proper father*;" accused him of blasphemy for this assumption; took up stones to stone him; and at last brought him to trial and condemned him on this charge." From these positions, he draws certain conclusions; and immediately proceeds to illustrate and confirm them, by making some quotations from an able discussion on the subject, in a modern work.

But though these positions be fully admitted, yet, they do not prove the disputed doctrine. If we admit that the title "*Son of God*," was understood in the common language of the Jews, as one of higher import than the official term "*Messias*," still we must acknowledge, that the Jews in question, considered Christ as applying that *higher title* to himself,—to the identical person, whom they accused of blasphemy, and had attempted to *stone*;—to that person, who was brought to *trial* and condemned to an ignominious *death*.

Now, if the title "*Son of God*," was applied to him, who was thus treated, and if it was not the invisible nature which was thus treated, we shall be constrained to acknowledge, that the title in question was not applied to that nature. If, however, we view that title as applicable to a nature, which forms a constituent part of that complex personage, we at once see the propriety with which it was claimed. Thus, the very person, who stood before the Jewish council, and was ultimately crucified, did with the strictest propriety profess to be the Son of God.

Several arguments might be advanced, in order to prove that this title does not necessarily and inevitably imply deity, in the person to whom it may be applied. One proof, however, will be sufficient. The Scripture applies this title to Adam, if then, it necessarily and inevitably implies deity in the person to whom it is applied, we must conclude that Adam was divine. This cannot be admitted; I therefore, conclude, that the title in question, does not always imply deity in the person to whom it is given. That inspired men have with propriety applied it to Jesus, who is confessedly a divine person, I readily admit: because a moment's reflection must convince us that as the above title is strictly applicable to a nature forming a constituent part of that complex personage, it is also, appropriate to him in whom that nature is included. To

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this complex personage the heather are given for an inheritance; and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.

In the 43d page of Mr. Watson's work, an allusion is made to part of the 1st chapter of Hebrews. Though Mr. W, seems to consider this passage as a striking proof of the disputed doctrine, yet, it cannot by fair interpretation be so understood. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners," (says the Apostle,) "spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by *himself purged our sins*, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the Angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the Angels said he at any time. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, let all the Angels of God worship him. And of the Angels he saith, who maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he said, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom: Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, *hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*"

I remark, that the title "*Son*," is here applied to the *person*, who having by *himself purged our sins*, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Now, that person was crucified; raised from the dead, and received up into heaven; and is therefore, no other than Jesus, who is justly entitled the "*Son of God*:" and who once had not where to lay his head. Whoever reads the address which closes the above quotation, must see that the *person* who is represented as being *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, is entitled "*The Son*." But such a representation cannot suit the

divine nature. Neither *angelic* nor *human beings*, are fellows of that nature. Could we persuade ourselves that the *first* and *third persons* in the Trinity are the *fellows* intended, yet, we could not suppose that the *divine nature* of Jesus was *anointed* with the oil of gladness *above them*. We cannot then suppose, that the anointing spoken of, had any reference to the divine nature of our Lord.

But, why is the person who was thus anointed, entitled God? Because the divine and human natures are united so as to constitute that complex personage; and consequently, the *names and titles* of those natures are appropriate to that person. This mysterious union, points out the propriety with which he is called "God,"* and "Son of God." It is then, only in viewing Christ as a complex personage, that we can ever discover the propriety of this sacred address. *He* was called *God*, because an *underived nature* to which that *title* belongs, is included in him; and he is said to be *anointed* with the oil of gladness *above his fellows*, because the nature which was *thus anointed*, forms a constituent *part of him*. On the address: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," see page 7.

Mr. Watson closes the argument from Scripture, by a slight examination of another passage. It occurs in Hebrews, 5 c. 8 v. After quoting this verse he immediately alludes to the preceding one, part of which he also quotes.

It is, therefore, necessary to present you with both verses. The Apostles having made several observations on the nature of the High-Priesthood, proceeds to notice Christ's super-eminent call to that office; and to represent him as a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisadec. He then commences his observations on the qualifications of that glorious personage, in the following words: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to *save him from death*, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things that *he suffered*." "The very stress of the Apostle's argument," says Mr. Watson, "com-

* If we can call him *God*, we may with equal propriety call him, the *express image* of that Eternal Being, who in sundry times and divers manners spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets."

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pels us to conclude that in the use of this term in this passage, he must refer *distinctly and exclusively* to the divine nature of Christ." Whoever reads this passage of Scripture with attention, must be convinced, that the term "*Son*," which occurs in it, has merely a reference to the *person* who is represented, as having offered up "prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him who was able to *save him from death*." I conclude therefore, that the term in question, is here used in reference to a *person*, who was capable of suffering death; and who even offered up prayers and supplications unto him who was able to *save him from death*. If this be granted, and if it be allowed that the *divine nature* cannot suffer death, how can we possibly suppose that the term, must refer "*exclusively* to the divine nature of Christ?" Such a supposition would lead us to maintain both parts of a palpable contradiction. It would lead us to maintain, that the divine nature of Christ could suffer death; and that it could not suffer death. If then, Mr. W. believes it could not suffer death, I know not how his assertion, can possibly admit the plea of unintentional mistake.

If, on the contrary, he believes the divine nature could suffer death, I would fain propose the following questions. If that nature exists *necessarily*, and by the same absolute necessity, *has always existed*, how could it possibly suffer death? Can it be denied that the *person* who, in the passage under contemplation, is stiled a "*Son*," offered up prayers and supplications to his heavenly *Father*, who was able to *save him from death*; which yet he *endured*, in obedience to his Father's will? If we understand this with exclusive reference to the divine nature of Christ, must we not suppose that nature to have died? That nature is, however, acknowledged to be the second person in the Trinity; if therefore, it died, must we not, in order to be consistent, acknowledge that the second person in the Trinity died? And if so, must we not also acknowledge that, during the time in which he was dead, there could only be two living persons in the Godhead? These queries sufficiently shew the horrid absurdities which flow from the supposition that the term "*Son*," which occurs in this passage, refers "*exclusively* to the divine nature of Christ."

The passage will be easily understood, if we remember that the divine and human natures were united, so as to constitute the complex personage spoken of: and yet, were not confounded. If this, I say, be kept in view, every difficulty on the present subject will disappear; for it will be acknowledged that, in his human nature, he could truly suffer.

But, if Christ suffered death in his human nature alone, are we therefore, to consider his death as no more the subject of admiration than that of an Apostle? In answer to this enquiry, it will be necessary to remark:—First, The death of the Apostles was not attended with an *infinite weight* of suffering. Secondly, Though they joyfully suffered, yet it was *not their own strength* which enabled them thus to suffer; on the contrary, it was the grace of our Lord Jesus. On the other hand, if we allow Jesus to be but one complex personage, constituted such by the mysterious union of the divine and human natures, it incontrovertably follows that as a human nature, forming a constituent part of that complex personage, really suffered death, therefore, that personage may be said to have truly suffered death.

Again, if that *personage*, by the infinite power of his divine nature, supported his human nature under an infinite weight of suffering, may we not say that he *supported himself* by his own power? Thus, that complex personage was, by *his own power*, supported under an infinite weight of suffering; and consequently, his sufferings are a subject of eternal admiration. If then, the sufferings of the Apostles be compared with his, they must sink nearly to insignificance itself. To conclude, if we turn to Hebrews, 10 c. 10 v. we shall find that by the will of God, believers under the Gospel are sanctified, through the "*offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.*"

In the 46th page of Mr. Watson's work, a quotation is made from the 2d chap. of the Phillipians. My observations on that passage, may be seen in page 16, of this Letter. By the 28th verse of the 7th chap. of Hebrews, which Mr. W. desires his readers to consult, I am led to understand, that "the Law maketh men High Priests, which have infirmities," who are weak and sinful; but the oath, which was since the Law, maketh the Son a Priest,

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who is consecrated for evermore. "This *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." Hebrews, 7. 24.

Mr. Watson has asserted, that "of the human nature of Jesus the first person is not the Father;" and yet endeavours to shew that the title "Son of God," which occurs in Luke 1 c. 35 v. is applied both to the divine and human natures of Christ. Now, as Mr. W. evidently believes that the first person in the Trinity is the Father of the Divine nature of Christ, and as he considers that nature to be the Son, spoken of in the above-mentioned passage, he must, in order to be consistent, believe that the first person is the Father of the Son spoken of, in that passage.

Again, from the observations he has made on that passage, it appears that he considers the title "Son of God," as being there applied, not only to the divine, but also to the human nature. Now, if the *first person* be the *Father* of the *Son* spoken of, and if the *human nature* be that *Son*, must not the *first person* be the *Father* of that nature? And if so, has not Mr. W. indirectly contradicted his own assertion?

But to return, the Sonship of the human nature, is unequivocally acknowledged, even by those who maintain the disputed doctrine. If then, the immaculate human nature, justly entitled "the Son of God," forms a constituent part of that complex personage called Jesus, must not the titles which belong to that nature, be considered as appropriate to that personage? If this question must be answered in the affirmative, it follows, that as the title "Son of God," is applicable to the human nature, so it is also applicable to the complex personage in whom that nature forms a constituent part.

I cannot leave this subject, without again reminding you, that seeing the divine and human natures are united so as to constitute but one complex personage, it follows, that the names and titles which are appropriate to those natures, must be considered as appropriate to that complex personage. Hence, he is frequently spoken of, under titles which are proper to one nature only.

This shews why the title "Son," is frequently applied to that complex personage, even when the passages in which it stands, refer to the divine nature; and on the other hand, it shews why the titles which necessarily and inevitably imply Deity, are also applied to that person, even when the passages in which they are found, pointedly refer to the human nature. We have then, no more right to suppose that the title "*Son*," is *strictly applicable* to the divine nature, than we have for supposing, that the *titles* which properly belong to Deity, are *strictly applicable* to the human nature.

In concluding, I would observe, that long as this Epistle is, I have been obliged to circumscribe my thoughts considerably on various passages in debate.

I hope that you will not be led to suppose, by any of the foregoing observations, that I have had a design to satirize or ridicule the Gentleman on whose performance I have animadverted. Satire and ridicule have been the bane of controversy, but sober discussion will always display truth to the greatest advantage.

I am, dear Sir,

Your's sincerely,

A. McCAMBRIDGE.

Quebec, 21st Decr. 1819.